

VZCZCXRO4765
RR RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHNEH
DE RUEHBI #0464 3480310
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 140310Z DEC 09
FM AMCONSUL MUMBAI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7617
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 8829
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 2168
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 1955
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0061
RUEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 2851

UNCLAS MUMBAI 000464

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP JILL NYSTROM; DHS FOR CIS/FDNS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [CPAS](#) [CMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [IN](#) [KFRD](#)

SUBJECT: O BOLLYWOOD! O VISAS IN MUMBAI SHOW LOW FRAUD

REF: A) MUMBAI 0293, B) 08 CHENNAI 00091, C) 09 CHENNAI 173, D) 09 NEW DELHI 1299

¶1. Summary: As home to one of the largest entertainment industries in the world, Mumbai sends many Bollywood film stars and production crews to the United States on O1 and O2 visas. Due to recent fraud issues with P3 visa holders and B1 applicants associated with the entertainment industry, Mumbai conducted an O2 visa validity study for CY2008. The study found that O2 travelers have a low overstay rate of 1.6%. Site visits to major Indian production houses and no evidence of fraud for O2 applicants further suggests that most entertainment companies in Mumbai do not intend to misuse their U.S. visas. END SUMMARY.

RECENT FRAUD SCAMS RAISE CONCERN ABOUT INDIAN ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

¶2. Recent fraud issues with P3 and B1/B2 visa applicants in our consular district and within India raised concern about whether similar fraud is occurring among O1 and O2 visa holders. In June 2009, Mumbai reported recent incidents of high risk P3 groups misusing their visas for human trafficking (reftel A). Chennai's FPU investigation busted a visa fraud racket of famous Tamil actors and industry associates personally assisting almost two hundred unknown "producers" to obtain U.S. visas (reftel B).

VALIDATION RESULTS

¶3. According to a validation study of O visa applications in CY2008, Mumbai has a high approval rate of 88% for O2 applicants. Of the 379 O2's that travelled to the United States, ADIS records suggest 55 did not return. However, Post found that twenty did return after checking case notes entered when they personally returned to the Consulate for physical cancellation of their visas. Twenty-nine of the outstanding O2 visas are still valid for travel to the United States. Although there were only six unresolved cases - showing a low overstay rate of 1.6%-some O2's still jumped ship. In this study, production boys, a valet, and fashion designer did not return from the U.S.

SITE VISITS IMPROVE ADJUDICATION TECHNIQUES

¶4. To enhance their interview strategies, ConOffs paid site visits to two major film production companies. ConOffs met with the CEO of Dharma Productions, Apoorva Mehta, who said he carefully reviews each member of the film crew before they apply for their visas to the U.S. He further stated that while the company does not take away employees' passports, it keeps close track of the crews' passports and whereabouts whenever the film crew travels to the United States. Upon returning to India, the company immediately submits their film crews' passports to the

Consulate for verification.

¶5. ConOffs visited the set of "My Name is Khan" and met with Bollywood actors, the director and choreographer to enhance their understanding of the film industry. Film production teams often take between 40-80 people to the United States and include production and camera assistants, lighting assistants, sound engineers, and personal staff of the actors.

¶6. COMMENT: Unlike some P3 visa holders from the entertainment industry, O2 visa holders appear to be strong, well qualified applicants. They have a sound record of using U.S. visas for their intended purpose. Given the successful results of this study, Post will continue to monitor O visa holders. If results continue to show a low overstay rate compared to other visa categories, it might be beneficial to consider the O visa category in the Business Executive Program (BEP) program. By extending the BEP program to larger production companies with a high volume of O1 and O2 applications, fraud efforts could be focused on scrutinizing lesser companies or infrequent travelers applying under P and O visa categories. END COMMENT.

FOLMSBEE